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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANTANANARIVO 000564

SIPDIS

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USDOC FOR BECKY ERKUL - DESK OFFICER
TREASURY FOR FBOYEPARIS FOR RKANEDA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [MA](#)
SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: POLITICAL POSTURING CONTINUES

Classified By: P/E CHIEF DOVIE HOLLAND FOR REASONS 1.4 B AND D.

¶1. (C) Summary: The international mediators have returned to Madagascar to arrange a meeting of the four Malagasy political rivals to take place in Mozambique August 5. Meanwhile, other political actors and civil society members are seeking the support of the international community to broaden the talks to include over one hundred politicians who would sign a convention following a three-day summit. Transition leader Andry "TGV" Rajoelina has come out in support of this idea, while exiled President Ravalomanana's team is opposed. A solution is urgent, as the transition regime is becoming increasingly splintered at the top, according to a TGV adviser, and civil rights violations continue. End summary.

Mozambique: To Go or Not to Go?

¶2. (C) As the SADC, AU, UN, and OIF envoys return to the scene this week, led by SADC mediator, and former Mozambique president, Chissano, the Malagasy political posturing on all sides, and transition leader Andry "TGV" Rajoelina's waffling, continue. During last week's international contact group meeting in Addis, Chissano announced that all four political rivals (Rajoelina, ousted President Ravalomanana, former President Ratsiraka, and former President Zafy) had agreed to meet in Mozambique to discuss the questions of amnesty and the partition of positions in the transition government. However, Rajoelina reportedly told the press three days later on July 25 that he did not intend to continue negotiating, as the transition regime was already installed. He, nevertheless, confirmed his intention of going to Mozambique to EU Ambassador Boidin and other diplomats on July 28. The international contact group will meet July 30 to receive an update from the mediators.

Meanwhile Others Seek Their Own Consensus

¶3. (C) Meanwhile, civil society has joined with representatives of the Zafy delegation, the HAT, and swing members of the Legalists (affiliated with Ravalomanana and his party TIM) to seek an alternative solution. This approach would open up the discussions to 120 political leaders, rather than the approximately 28 currently involved, who would come together for a three day summit with the goal of adopting a transition convention (already drafted). Legalist leader Alain Andriamisezaka told Emboff July 16 that he had secured the support of Zafy, presidential hopeful Pierrot (breakaway leader of Ratsiraka's party AREMA), and some members of the HAT, and showed Emboff several pages of

signatures of Zafy and Pierrot supporters. Ratsiraka refused to participate if Pierrot was involved. Alain claimed that he had also raised the proposition with hard-core Ravalomanana supporters, including the recently arrested bombing suspect and TIM spokesman Raharinaivo, who "was not against the idea." However, TIM delegation leader Fetison publicly stated that he was opposed July 28, following TGV's endorsement of a similar idea. Ravalomanana's Prime Minister Manandafy's (currently still under house arrest and scheduled to go to trial August 4) MFM party leaders told the Ambassador in a separate meeting July 16 that they were opposed to this effort, as it was a distraction that shifted the focus away from the necessary meeting of the four principles. Emboff encourage Alain to seek to bring Ravalomanana and the rest of the TIM delegation on board and to coordinate his efforts with the UN/AU/SADC/OIF, who are mediating the negotiations between the four political leaders that will hopefully be convened next week in Mozambique.

¶4. (C) Pierrot told the Ambassador July 21 that he supported the idea of the summit, and asserted that within the HAT, Jean Lahiniriko (second place presidential candidate in 2006 with 11 percent of the vote), Marson Evarist, and Roland Ratsiraka (the former president's nephew who definitely has his eye on the presidential ball) were in agreement. According to Pierrot, they are willing to dump Monja Roindifo, current HAT prime minister, in favor of a consensus candidate, contrary to Alain's proposal that Monja be maintained. The transition charter proposed the establishment of the usual panoply of institutions, including a national reconciliation council, a transition congress, a unity cabinet, a high transition court, and an independent

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electoral commission. Pierrot said they had requested a meeting with TGV to present their approach. Civil society leaders Aristide Velompanahy, Jose Rakotomavo, and Andre Rasolo (all former ministers themselves) pitched the summit idea to the diplomatic corps, including the Charge d'Affaires, convened July 28 by the dip corps dean, and requested that the international community fund the USD 33,000 summit to ensure that it would be viewed as a neutral forum. They claimed that the HAT was on board and would fund it but they felt such support would condemn the effort to failure as being unilateral. No one committed to providing funds, however, during this meeting and participants urged the civil society leaders to raise the idea with the mediators.

¶5. (C) Jean Marcel Miandrisoa, a member of the Zafy delegation, urged the Charge July 27 to pressure the four leaders to sign a charter. As a draft charter, with separate amnesty bill, were already prepared, it was just a matter of pressuring the four leaders to actually sign. (Note: there are several draft charter versions floating around and there is certainly not agreement on all the details. End note.) His proposal, similar to the one described above, was to convene a three-day meeting of 360 representatives from various political, ethnic, civil society, and military groups who could essentially shame the four into signing. (Comment: Miandrisoa's amnesty provisions, which couldn't be adopted until a legislature were in place, are unlikely to appease either Ravalomanana, who would likely end up in jail once his "crimes were established" or Ratsiraka. End comment.) Miandrisoa explained that TGV had called a meeting with Zafy July 21 to discuss the division of positions and signing a charter, but then balked at Zafy's amnesty proposal. Miandrisoa feared that TGV, who had neglected earlier promises to include Zafy's supporters in the transition, was just biding time and stringing them along. He claimed that Zafy had recently traveled to the northern coastal areas to calm his constituents, who did not feel represented by the ethnically Merina Rajoelina, and urgently wanted a consensual transition. He also stressed the importance of conducting a thorough census and voter registration drive prior to elections, as only about 70 percent of adults were currently

registered to vote, and the Merina were disproportionately represented.

While HAT Splinters

16. (C) Zaza Ramandimbiarison, TGV's chief of staff, requested to see the Ambassador July 21 to say that he is also working behind the scenes to push the four protagonists towards consensual elections. He stressed the urgency of this solution, as "things are awful and getting worse, there is no one flying the plane." He referred to rivalries within the HAT and to insubordination vis-Q-vis TGV himself. Many are trying to make TGV fail by "sliding banana peels under his feet." (Many contacts have pointed to evidence of a large and growing rift between Rajoelina and his PM Monja, who is said to have the backing of the military mutineers. End note.) Zaza himself is close to resigning but is staying on, he said, to try to get the negotiations and consensus back on track. He thinks TGV is listening to him but is not sure. He claimed that Ravalomanana/TIM spokesman Raharinaivo traveled to South Africa to pitch Zaza's idea to the exiled president, and that others were already on board so agreement was near. TGV told the press July 28 that the HAT hoped to enlarge negotiations to include other participants from political parties, civil society, and economic operators to adopt an "inclusive and consensual" transition charter.

And Human Rights Abuses Continue

17. (C) Manandafy's lawyer, Me Noro Rabemananjara's, house was searched July 27 and her computer seized, reportedly by gendarmes who did not follow the proper procedures. The bar association has organized a sit-in in protest. Four out of the five "bombing suspects" named by the HAT July 20 (only one day after the failed July 19 reported bomb attempts) have been arrested and are being held provisionally for 15 days, with the possibility of renewal. When the fifth did not present himself, the authorities apprehended his mother, who was held for a few days before being released. However, they have now reportedly taken his father hostage to pressure the

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fifth suspect to turn himself in. The four parliamentarians who were arrested in April for civil disturbance plead not guilty July 28, but were not released on bail. A verdict is expected August 11.

Comment: Limited Chance for True Consensus

18. (C) The meeting of the four will hopefully take place in Mozambique, giving Ravalomanana a chance to participate in the solution. Various versions of the three-day summit idea would all likely leave him out, but may be touted as a consensus as they would include hundreds of other political actors, even some fringe Legalists, if not hard-core TIM/Ravalomanana supporters. As all the politicians vie for a place at the trough, many in the international community are beginning to lose patience with those that are "blocking the negotiations and holding the nation hostage" -- with this ire directed mainly at the exiled Ravalomanana and Ratsiraka. If the meeting of the four next week in Mozambique fails, which is a real possibility given the large divide between the positions of Ravalomanana (who still insists on being president of the transition according to his adviser in South Africa Prega) and Rajoelina (who will not likely give up his current place or renounce candidacy for the Presidency), then at least some international support may start to gather behind one of these "plan Bs", with a likely less-than consensual outcome. End comment.

STROMAYER